



A Quarterly Newsletter by the City of Fort Smith

January, 2010

TRANSIT TRANSFER STATION ENHANCES RIDER SERVICES

Passengers of Fort Smith transit now have a comfortable transfer station when their travel requires the use of more than one route. Many passengers can reach their destination only by transferring from one bus to another. Total trip time may be as much as 1 hour or longer. Previously, transfers occurred in a parking lot.

The station will remain locked when buses aren't present.

Funding for the station was provided by the Federal Transit Administration and with economic stimulus funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The city provided the land as a local match for the federal funding.



The new transfer station is located in downtown Fort Smith along Wheeler Ave. at South B St. Each hour, 4 of Fort Smith's fixed-route transit buses and the downtown shuttle converge at the transit center. The center provides shelter from inclement weather, restrooms, and vending machines.

The new Fort Smith transit transfer station makes it easier for passengers to use the public buses. One-way fares are \$1 for fixed route service (including a transfer, if needed) and \$2 for demand-

response service. Services are provided Monday - Saturday. Route, schedule, and other information is available by calling 783-6464 or by logging onto the Internet at www.fortsmithar.gov, click on departments, and then transit. Fort Smith transit serves 15,000 passengers each month.

Volunteerism Flourishes in Fort Smith

Fort Smith was named one of 12 Arkansas volunteer communities of the year for 2009. This was the 11th time and the 5th consecutive year Fort Smith received the volunteerism award.

The award recognizes the more than 514,000 hours volunteered by 9,513 Fort Smithians in more than 300 volunteer activities. Mayor **Ray Baker** recently accepted the award at the Arkansas Municipal League's convention.

If you'd like to become involved in a richly rewarding experience, contact your favorite service agency, any school or church, any hospital, the United Way at 782-1311, Project Compassion at 783-2273 or RSVP (retired senior volunteer program) at 783-4155. Your time and talents will help make *Life Worth Living in Fort Smith!*

Sewer Work Moves to Zero St. Area

Over the last 10 years, Fort Smith has undertaken \$103 million in improvements to its sanitary sewer system. The improvements alleviate problems created by excessive stormwater entering the system. The stormwater overwhelms the collection pipes and treatment plants, creating overflows, backups and the discharge of improperly treated sewage to the Arkansas River.

During the last decade, voters have overwhelmingly approved the use of more than \$120 million in sales tax bonds to pay for the work. Work at the P St. treatment plant

See Sewer Work, page 2



FSPD Earns National Re-Accreditation

The Fort Smith police dept. has attained national re-accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). The FSPD was first accredited in 2003 and re-accredited in 2006. Accreditations are valid for 3 years.

In order to earn and maintain accreditation, the FSPD has to meet over 400 rigorous standards affecting all areas of its operation. A team of independent CALEA assessors from different regions of the U.S. spent several days with the FSPD verifying continued compliance with the standards. In Arkansas, only 4 of 359 city, county and state police agencies have achieved national accreditation.

The CALEA accreditation program improves the delivery of law enforcement service by providing up-to-date standards and ensuring compliance with nationally-recognized practices. Chief **Kevin Lindsey** commented that the re-accreditation reflects the professional commitment to exceptional law enforcement services by all 214 employees of the FSPD. *THE FOCUS* congratulates the Fort Smith police dept. for achieving CALEA re-accreditation.

FIRE LANES ARE NOT CONVENIENT PARKING SPACES



It's a simple and direct message – **FIRE LANE NO PARKING.** However, many motorists ignore the warning for the sake of parking closer to the front door.

In case of fire or other emergency, it's important to have plenty of space to access buildings with the necessary equipment and to provide safe distances for the public.

When a fire lane is needed for an emergency, it must be available immediately. There's no time to ask someone to move their vehicle. Care of life or property may depend on the ability of firefighters, paramedics, and police officers to quickly reach those in need of assistance.

Motorists are reminded that fire lanes are marked so that emergency care professionals may swiftly access a building. If you have illegally parked in a fire lane, it may endanger lives as well as cost you a sizeable fine. Help keep Fort Smith safer by not parking in fire lanes.



Drive Friendly Tip!!

Pedestrians always have the right-of-way when in crosswalks, even if you have a green traffic signal. You shouldn't proceed over the crosswalk until all pedestrians have completed crossing the street. When making a

left or right turn at an intersection, be alert for pedestrians who are crossing the street onto which you're turning. Never block or park over a crosswalk.

Drive friendly tips are offered by the Fort Smith police dept. and street & traffic control dept. to help the flow of traffic.

Sewer Work, from page 1

will be completed later this year. The areas of the collection system with the worst problems were in the Sunnymede basin in northern Fort Smith. Work in these neighborhoods is also nearing completion. The improvements have reduced the frequency of sewage backups and overflows.

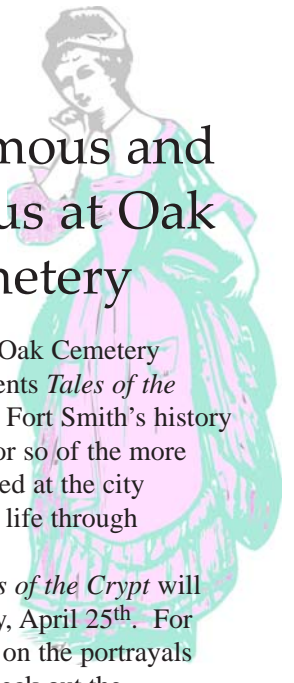
The next area of the city to receive improvements will be the Zero St. basin in southern areas of Fort Smith. Engineering work is underway which will lead to the rehabilitation of sewer lines, the construction of relief sewers to carry excess flows, and the construction of an equalization basin to contain the flows until they can be released for complete treatment. The equalization basin will be located in the vicinity of Jenny Lind Rd. and Zero St. Construction of these improvements is expected to begin this spring and take 48 months to complete.

The Fort Smith utility dept. is committed to reducing the occurrences of sewer backups and overflows of untreated sewage. Citizens needing more information about the improvements may contact the utility dept. staff at 784-2231.

The Famous and Infamous at Oak Cemetery

Each year, the Oak Cemetery Commission presents *Tales of the Crypt*, a tribute to Fort Smith's history makers. A dozen or so of the more than 13,000 interred at the city cemetery come to life through re-enactments.

This year, *Tales of the Crypt* will be held on Sunday, April 25th. For more information on the portrayals and tour times, check out the website for *Tales of the Crypt* at <http://www.fortsmithparks.com>. Click on Oak Cemetery and then click on special events, or call 784-1006 as the date of the event draws closer.



EXPERT CARE WHEN YOU NEED IT

When you dial 9-1-1 with a medical emergency, Fort Smith EMS and its 60 employees are ready to serve you with the best possible care. The service is staffed with paramedics and uses state-of-the-art ambulances that are akin to mobile emergency rooms.

The paramedics arrive in an advanced life support ambulance capable of treating and stabilizing heart attack or stroke patients, trauma victims, and a variety of other medical emergencies. Rapid, intense care improves a patient's chances of survival and aids a more complete recovery.

Fort Smith EMS employs 48 nationally registered paramedics licensed by the Arkansas Department of Health. Each paramedic undergoes 2+ years of education and training, and regularly participates in continuing education to stay abreast of the latest advancements in emergency medical care. Paramedics' competencies are regularly tested to assure they're ready for any emergency.

Fort Smith EMS operates with 8 ambulances. An ambulance, fully-equipped, costs more than \$250,000. At

any time, 4 ambulances are in service ready to respond to emergency calls. The ambulances are stationed at the 2 hospitals, the EMS headquarters on S. Greenwood Ave., and at fire station 9 on Cavanaugh Rd. Fort Smith EMS receives 11,000 calls for service annually.

Fort Smith EMS is a nonprofit

organization governed by a board of directors. Its annual budget is \$3 million. The ambulance service operates solely on payments for services and isn't tax supported.

However, Fort Smith EMS has important

partnerships with the City of Fort Smith, Sparks Regional Medical Center, and St. Edward Mercy Medical Center.

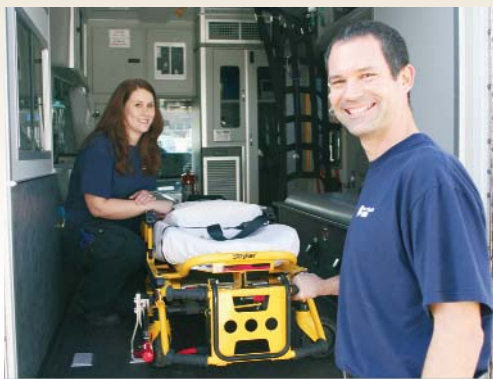
The ambulance service is headquartered on Greenwood Ave. in a building owned by the City of Fort Smith. Fort Smith EMS houses an ambulance and paramedics at fire station 9 to provide faster responses in those areas. The Fort Smith fire dept. works closely with Fort Smith EMS through the fire department's first-responder program. For many medical emergencies,

a fire engine with trained staff will be the first to reach a victim and begin basic life support until paramedics arrive.

The 2 hospitals partner with Fort Smith EMS by employing paramedics in the emergency rooms when the medics aren't responding to calls. A physician with extensive emergency room experience, **Dr. Stephen Graves**, serves as the medical director for Fort Smith EMS. He writes protocols for patient care and oversees the quality of Fort Smith EMS' services.

Fort Smith EMS executive director **Tim Hearn** reports that the ambulances and paramedics are available any time for any reason that someone believes emergency medical care is needed. Citizens shouldn't hesitate calling 9-1-1 for an ambulance. Fees are charged only if a patient is transported.

Fort Smith EMS has faithfully served the community for 31 years. The critical care helps victims survive traumatic injuries or life-threatening medical conditions by bringing highly-qualified paramedics and well-equipped ambulances to the patient. Residents needing more information about Fort Smith EMS may e-mail Tim Hearn at timn@fsems.org or call 783-1078. Fort Smith EMS always welcomes groups who want to tour an ambulance and learn more about emergency medical care.



Two of Fort Smith EMS' 48 paramedics, **Michelle Graham** and **Scott Evans**.



Green Living Tip

OG+E®

In winter, leave your home's thermostat at a comfortable setting. Your home won't warm any faster if you raise the thermostat setting to a temperature higher than you really need. Also, check windows, doors and air ducts for leakage. Insulate, caulk, weatherstrip and seal if needed.

Green living tips are sponsored by OG+E to help lower your energy costs and your carbon footprint. They're good for your wallet and for the environment.

*we make a living
by what we get, but
we make a life by
what we give.*

.....Winston Churchill

City Sanitation Service Coming to Southern Areas

Later this year, all residential areas south of Zero St. will begin receiving sanitation service from the City of Fort Smith department of sanitation. Many of these areas have been served by Altes Sanitation Services.

The change was made due to the upcoming expiration of the Altes Sanitation franchise agreement on July 10th. Award of a new franchise would have required competitive bidding. The board of directors was concerned about the possibility of a low bidder providing inferior service, and also found it desirable for the entire city to receive the same level of sanitation service. The city's department of sanitation currently serves 81% of the households in Fort Smith.

Beginning the week of July 12th, City of Fort Smith crews will provide refuse, recycling and landscape waste collection citywide. The week before, automated collection carts for refuse and recyclables will be delivered to each household in the areas now served by Altes Sanitation. All refuse and recyclables should be placed in these containers for collection by an automated truck. When the containers

are delivered, residents will be advised of their new collection day.

The automated collection services provide residents with many benefits. First, all refuse is placed in the containers, so there's no unsightly piles of garbage in the neighborhood on collection day. The containers help prevent the scattering of refuse by wind or animals. Second, all 3 collections – refuse, recyclables, and yard waste – are made on the same day. You don't have to remember 3 separate collection days, and your neighborhood will see solid waste set out only once a week.

The automated service is provided for the same monthly rate. There's no separate charge for the first refuse container or the recycling container. Households needing more than one refuse container pay \$5/month for each additional cart.

Automated collection has been successfully implemented for nearly 15,000 households in Fort Smith since 2006. Residents find the containers easy to handle, enjoy the same-day service for all collections, and appreciate the improved appearance of their neighborhoods on collection day.

Citizens with questions about solid waste services provided by the City of Fort Smith may log onto www.sanitation.fsark.com or call 784-2350.



Easter Bunny Hides Eggs at Tilles Park



Government Access Programming Moves to Channel 6

Late last year, the government access channel on the Cox Communications cable TV system switched positions with KFSM-TV. KFSM-TV is now on channel 5, and the Fort Smith city government channel may be found on channel 6.

The government access channel provides timely information about city projects and services, community events, and other items of interest. Board of directors meetings are also televised on channel 6. The channel operates 24/7.

Community organizations who would like events publicized on the government access channel should send their information to the city clerk's office. Event information should be e-mailed to ajones@fortsmithar.gov at least 2 weeks in advance. Information may also be FAX'd to 784-2256 or called into 784-2208.



Colorful Easter eggs await children at the mayor's annual Easter egg hunt sponsored by Grand Ave. Baptist Church. The search for the springtime goodies begins at 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 3rd at Tilles Park, 3700 Grand Ave. Children ages 1 to 10 are invited to join the hunt for the Easter bunny's treasures.

Board Approves Street & Drainage Work

...\$129 million projected over next 5 years!

The board of directors recently approved a \$129 million 5-year plan for street and drainage improvements, and authorized implementation of the 2010 projects. The plan is financed largely with the 1¢ sales tax pledged to street and drainage improvements, and with federal grant funds.

The 1¢ sales tax has been in place since 1985, and was renewed by voters in 1995 and 2005. The tax revenues have resulted in most neighborhood streets being overlaid or reconstructed; significant roadway

widenings such as Old Greenwood Rd., Kelley Highway, Phoenix Ave., and Massard Rd.; and numerous stormwater drainage improvements.

Upcoming major projects include the widening of Arkansas Highway 45 between Phoenix Ave. and Zero St. and replacement of the bridge over I-540, widening of Jenny Lind Rd. from Cavanaugh Rd. to Zero St., extension of Ingersoll Ave. from Jenny Lind Rd. to U.S. Highway 71 B, and resurfacing of portions of Waldron Rd. and Grand Ave. The Highway 45 project will be

accomplished in a partnership with the Arkansas Highway & Transportation Dept. Funding of \$45 million is also provided over the next 5 years to continue neighborhood street overlays and to alleviate localized flooding problems.

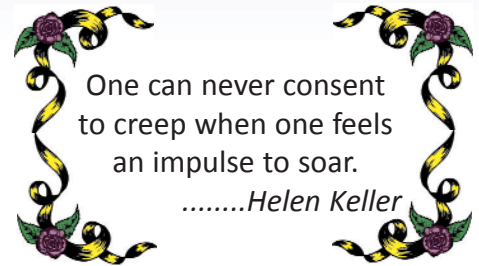
A complete copy of Fort Smith's 5-year budget for street and drainage work is available on the Internet. Go to www.fortsmithar.gov, click on departments, and then engineering.

CITIZENS ACADEMIES TAKING APPLICATIONS

Fort Smith citizens and business persons have 3 unique opportunities to see the behind-the-scenes workings of city government. The citizens police academy, citizens fire academy and citizens academy provide a backstage pass to municipal operations that most citizens never see.

Participants make simulated felony traffic stops, operate a fire hose, see how drinking water is tested, decide a land use zoning case, observe traffic control operations up close, and learn about Fort Smith's governance and how services are paid for. Each academy meets weekly for 8-11 weeks.

All 3 academies are accepting applications for spring classes. Information describing weekly sessions, meeting dates and applications are available on the city's web site at www.fortsmithar.gov. Click on government, and then citizens academies. Or, you can call the city administrator's office at 784-2201 for more information.



City Director Elected to National League of Cities Leadership

Late last year, at large city director and vice mayor **Gary Campbell** was elected to the 46-member board of directors of the National League of Cities. The National League of Cities advocates for the nearly 19,500 municipal governments across the United States including Fort Smith. The organization monitors federal legislation affecting cities, provides training resources and research and

analysis, and promotes the country's cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance.

Campbell is also serving as president of the Arkansas Municipal League. He's been an at-large city director since 1995 and vice mayor since 1999. *THE FOCUS* congratulates Gary Campbell on his election to the National League of Cities board of directors.

**Potential
customers
would see your
ad here. Makes
dollars and
cents for you.**



ENTERTAINMENT CALENDAR

*The wintertime chill is quickly forgotten
with the variety of entertainment and other
fun events available in Fort Smith.*



<i>Dearly Beloved</i>	Feb. 18-27	Four gospel singing sisters have mended their breach and are now in line to sing at the wedding of the year. The family is dysfunctional but lovable. You've never seen such a knot-tying affair. Presented by the Fort Smith Little Theater. 783-2966 or www.fslt.org for show times and tickets.
<i>Fort Smith Home Show</i>	Feb. 26-28	Join the Fort Smith Homebuilders Assn. at the Convention Center for their annual show of new ideas for your home.
<i>African Children's Choir</i>	Mar. 2	This unique choir shows the beauty, dignity and potential of a child, and raises awareness of the plight of orphaned and abandoned children. Presented by UA Fort Smith at the Fort Smith Convention Center. 788-7300 or www.uafortsmith.edu for tickets.
<i>River Valley Lawn and Garden Show</i>	Mar. 26-28	See the latest in landscaping ideas and outdoor features for your home at the Fort Smith Convention Center.
<i>UA Fort Smith Jazz Band</i>	Apr. 8	Join the university's jazz band for their spring concert at the Fort Smith Convention Center. 788-7300 or www.uafortsmith.edu for info and tickets.
<i>Look Homeward Angel</i>	Apr. 8-17	This novel adapted for stage tells the tale of Eugene Gant, a young man growing up in the early 20 th Century who's assessing family relationships, community, college, love affairs, and ideas through literature. Presented by the Fort Smith Little Theater. 783-2966 or www.fslt.org for show times and tickets.
<i>UA Fort Smith Choral Concert</i>	Apr. 13	Experience UAFS' chorale at the Fort Smith Convention Center. 788-7300 or www.uafortsmith.edu for info and tickets.
<i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i>	Apr. 15	UA Fort Smith presents this groundbreaking theatrical masterpiece that's one of the most popular and enduring works ever created for the theater. Fort Smith Convention Center. 788-7300 or www.uafortsmith.edu for tickets.
<i>Czech Mates</i>	Apr. 17	Join the Fort Smith Symphony for an evening infused with Czech and Bohemian spirit. Experience Mozart's powerful "Prague" Symphony, an exuberant work inspired by the composer's favorite city. Fort Smith Convention Center. 452-7575 or www.fortsmithsymphony.org for tickets.
<i>UA Fort Smith Spring Symphonic Band Concert</i>	Apr. 22	The UAFS symphonic band presents its spring concert at the Fort Smith Convention Center. 788-7300 or www.uafortsmith.edu for info and tickets.

Arts Enhance Fort Smith's Quality of Place

.....nominate a deserving artist, supporter or organization

Mayor Ray Baker has announced the 19th annual mayor's honors for the visual and performing arts will be held on Tuesday, April 27th at 7 p.m. The awards will be presented in the Arkansas Best Corporation Theater at the Fort Smith Convention Center.

The mayor's honors for the arts are given each year to 3 individuals and a business who promote the visual or performing arts in Fort Smith. Past honorees have included performers, artists, poets and those who bring the arts to Fort Smith. Five young artist achievement awards will also be presented to high school seniors for accomplishments in music, drama and visual arts.

Nomination forms are available at all public libraries, the chamber of commerce, 612 Garrison Ave., by calling the mayor's office at 784-2437, or by e-mailing the mayor's office at mayor@fortsmithar.gov. Nominations must be received by February 24th.

Community Notification System Keeps *YOU* Informed

Last year, the City of Fort Smith launched a new community communications system to rapidly alert citizens about emergencies and to communicate other vital public service information. Messages can be sent to telephones and e-mail addresses.

Notifications are made for incidences such as a missing child alert, water service interruptions due to repair of broken mains, or delays in sanitation pick up because of inclement weather. Messages can be sent city-wide or to specific geographic areas of the city affected by a particular occurrence.

Residents and businesses who receive traditional phone service (such as AT&T) with a **published** telephone number are automatically included in the notification

system. Persons with unlisted numbers or who receive voice over Internet phone service (such as Cox Communications or AT&T U-verse) aren't automatically included.

Those telephone customers may subscribe to the community notification system online by going to www.fortsmithar.gov and link to the Connect CTY portal. There, you can register your phone number, add your cellular phone and e-mail address, or unsubscribe if you like. TTY/TDD users should also go to this web site for additional registration requirements.

Citizens needing more information about the community communications system may call the Fort Smith fire dept. at 784-2370.

Father/Daughter Dance

Fort Smith's 4th annual father and daughter dance will be hosted by the parks and recreation dept. on Saturday, February 20th. The special evening for dads and their daughters begins at 7 p.m. in the River Park Pavilion, 100 North B St. Make it an even more special evening by having dinner at a downtown Fort Smith restaurant before the dance.

Fathers and daughters of all ages are welcome to attend. What a perfect time to treat your daughter to a special night out! MS Soundworks will be spinning the tunes, so be ready to limbo and slide. Dress for the evening is semi-formal: dads in jackets and ties, and ladies in dresses. Admission includes a photo of each couple and refreshments.

Tickets are \$20 per couple and \$10 for each additional daughter. Stop by the Creekmore Park community center or call 784-2368 to purchase your tickets. The event is limited to the first 100 daddy/daughter duos.



A Roaring Good Time

The University of Arkansas Fort Smith will be hosting Fort Smith Night at the Lions and Lady Lions basketball games on Thursday, February 25th. Fort Smith families will be given REDUCED admission to that evening's games when presenting the coupon below. Adult admission will be \$4, children 12-17 will be \$2, and children under 12 will be admitted free.

Lions basketball is played in the spacious Stubblefield Center located at the corner of Waldron Rd. and Kinkead Ave. The women's contest begins at 5:30 p.m. and the men's game tips off at 8:00 p.m. The UA Fort Smith teams will be playing University of the Incarnate Word from San Antonio, Tex.

This is UAFS' first season to compete at the NCAA Division II level. The teams previously played at the junior college level.

The City of Fort Smith will have numerous interactive displays throughout the Stubblefield Center's

concourse. Information and fun activities from the police, fire, utilities, sanitation, transit, parks and other departments will be available.



FORT SMITH NIGHT AT UAFS BASKETBALL

Thursday, February 25, 2010 5:30 & 8:00 p.m. tip offs

Stubblefield Center - Waldron Rd. @ Kinkead Ave.

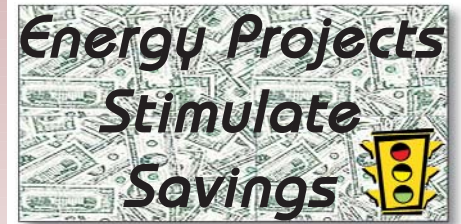
**\$2 off each admission with this coupon.
Children under 12 FREE**



New Construction

The following developments, new businesses and facility expansions demonstrate the vibrant growth happening in Fort Smith every day.

Cisterna Woods residential subdivision	Chaffee Crossing along Massard Rd.	Ongoing
Riverview Fellowship Church	6101 Kinkead Ave.	Winter/Spring, 2010
Willowbrook residential subdivision	Brooken Hill Dr. at Hwy. 253	Ongoing
Community Dental Clinic	3426 Armour Ave.	Winter/Spring, 2010
Umarex USA manufacturing and distribution center	7700 Chad Colley Blvd.	Spring, 2010
Clark Family Chiropractic Center	8000 Dallas St.	Spring, 2010
Ligon Dental Clinic	8020 Dallas St.	Spring, 2010
Second Street Live performing theater	101 North 2 nd St.	Spring, 2010
The Woods at Chaffee Crossing residential subdivision	Massard Rd. at Zero St.	Ongoing
Social Security Administration office	6801 Dallas St.	Spring, 2010
Christ the King School classroom addition	1920 S. Greenwood Ave.	Spring, 2010
Medical Office Bldg.	4015 Massard Rd.	Spring, 2010
Paul Winborn dental office	3225 South 70 th St.	Spring, 2010
Davis Building remodeling	823 Garrison Ave.	Summer, 2010
Peachtree Hospice	2910 Jenny Lind Rd.	Summer, 2010
California Customs	5920 South 36 th St.	Summer, 2010
Eastside Baptist Church outreach building	8025 Dallas St.	Fall, 2010



Fort Smith is receiving more than \$870,000 in economic stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The funds must be used for projects which will reduce the city's energy consumption.

Approximately \$300,000 of the funds will be used to complete the conversion of Fort Smith's traffic signals from incandescent lights to LED lights. The LED lights use 80% less electricity, have a much longer life, and are brighter than the older-style lights. Of the 146 signalized intersections in Fort Smith, 50 still have the less-efficient incandescent lights.

The remaining stimulus funds will be used for building improvements to various municipal facilities. An analysis will be undertaken to identify projects which will produce the greatest energy savings. Many city facilities are 40+ years old and in need of heating/air conditioning modernizations, more energy-efficient lighting, better insulation, and new windows and doors. All of these improvements will reduce the city government's energy consumption, saving money for tax payers and rate payers.

The energy efficiency work will be contracted out. This method of accomplishing the projects will sustain or create jobs in the private sector, which is a primary goal of the federal government's stimulus funding. The work will also help achieve one of the

board of directors' goals:

reducing energy consumption and costs in city facilities.



Budget for 2010 Holds Line on Costs

Last month, the city board of directors adopted Fort Smith's 2010 budget for day-to-day operations and for major infrastructure projects. The budget is the city's business plan for providing residents and businesses with quality municipal services.

The 2010 operating budget of \$102.4 million is \$2.7 million less than the 2009 budget, due largely to the impacts of the national economic recession. The budget was balanced by deferring fleet replacements and by freezing wages for most city employees. Employees who earn the

least will see modest pay adjustments. No service cuts were made to balance the budget.

The 2010 capital project budget totals \$114.5 million. Significant projects include ongoing construction of the wet weather sanitary sewer improvements, rehabilitation and expansion of the Lake Fort Smith water treatment plant, numerous street and stormwater drainage projects, and construction of the next cell for burying waste at the Fort Smith landfill.

The 2010 budget is expected to be a

year of economic recovery for the nation and for Fort Smith. Although the spending plan includes few new initiatives, the resource allocations will allow the city to provide essential public services and continue with much-needed infrastructure upgrades.

A complete copy of Fort Smith's 2010 budget may be viewed at any public library; at the city's finance department, 623 Garrison Ave., suite 512; or online at www.fortsmithar.gov. Click on departments, and then finance.

2010 CENSUS - It's In Our Hands

On April 1st, all Americans will have an opportunity to uphold one of the articles of the U.S. Constitution. The document which is the framework for our government requires a national census once every 10 years. The first census took place in 1790, and has occurred every decade since then.

In about 2 months, the U.S. Census Bureau will mail or hand deliver a questionnaire to every household in the country. This year's census questionnaire will be short – just 10 questions that can be completed in 10 minutes or less. More detailed socioeconomic information previously collected through the decennial census will be asked of a small percentage of the population through the annual American Community Survey.

Your responses to the census questionnaire are held in strict confidence. By law, the U.S. Census Bureau may not share an individual's responses with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities.

Collecting accurate census information is important for many reasons. Every year, the federal government allocates more than \$400 billion to states and communities based, in part, on census data. The amounts of municipal funding from the state government are also determined by census data. Retailers and potential employers use census data to determine locations for new stores, manufacturing facilities, and new developments. The data also helps various levels of government plan for services to meet the public's needs. Finally, each area's amount of representation in federal and state legislative bodies is determined by population.

Help support the U.S. Constitution by participating in the 2010 census.

Residents with questions about the 2010 census may log onto the Internet at www.census.gov/2010. Or, they may contact Maggie Rice in the Fort Smith planning dept. at 784-2266 or by e-mail at mrice@fortsmithar.gov.



More Light for Leisure and Activities After Work

Ready, Reset, Go.....Daylight Saving time is just around the corner. It begins on Sunday, March 14th.

Daylight Saving Time is a way of getting more light out of the day during the summer. The sun appears to rise one hour later in the morning, when people are usually asleep. It sets one hour later in the evening, seeming to stretch the day longer.

The reason Daylight Saving Time works is because it saves energy due to less artificial light needed during the evening hours.

Benjamin Franklin first suggested Daylight Saving Time in 1784, but it was not until World War I, in 1916 when it was adopted.

Spring your clocks forward at bedtime on Saturday, March 13th.



Are You Insured For A Sewer Backup?

Grins & Groans



Grins to motorists who obey the speed limits in our neighborhoods.



Groans to drivers who park in fire lanes.

With nearly 500 miles of wastewater collection lines and 33,000 service connections, sewer stoppages are inevitable. You can take precautions to minimize or prevent damage to your home or business in the event of a sewer backup.

A flow relief type cleanout or backflow preventer on your sewer service line is the first defense. These devices can lessen or possibly prevent a backup from entering a structure. A licensed plumber can help you determine which type of device would give you the greatest level of protection. Cleanout devices should be unobstructed so that they work properly when needed. They should be kept clear of all landscaping materials.

Objects not intended for the sewer, such as grease or disposable diapers, should never be flushed down the toilet or poured into drains. An accumulation of these items

can cause a blockage leading to a backup of sewage. Also, trees and other large vegetation shouldn't be planted near sewer lines. The root systems can invade the sewer pipes and create blockages.

The city will reimburse property owners one time for damage expenses up to \$500 when a sewer backup is caused by a blockage in the main line. Property owners are strongly encouraged to obtain a sewer backup endorsement to their property insurance policies. This endorsement will cover damages resulting from backups. Most insurance policies don't automatically include sewer backup coverage – you must ask your agent to add this coverage to your policy.

Residents and business persons needing more information about sewer backup protection may call the Fort Smith utility department at 784-2231.

New Residential Development Remains Strong



Despite national downward trends, Fort Smith's housing construction market continues to see robust activity. There's currently 8 residential subdivisions with more than 800 lots under construction in the city. Most of the development is for single-family homes.

Fort Smith's housing construction activity typically weathers the ups and downs of the national economy. **Dave Hughes**, executive director of the Greater Fort Smith Association of Home Builders, reports that Fort Smith's housing market recovery has started, and the trend is upward. He attributes

the recovery to record-low interest rates, tax credits for home buyers, and local population growth spurred by diversification of Fort Smith's economy.

Hughes isn't concerned that the increased residential construction activity will cause a glut of homes in the local housing market. He says, "The area doesn't have a tendency to overbuild, and there's very little speculative housing construction. The housing industry in Fort Smith is conservative."

The residential building activity produces many benefits for the

community. First, it helps to meet people's needs for quality, modern homes. A flourishing housing market attracts new residents to the area, which helps recruit new employers to the region. As our population grows, we see new retail stores. Lastly, the construction activity provides hundreds of jobs for the local economy.

Fort Smith has always been a great place to call home. The variety of new housing choices will keep Fort Smith a vibrant community for generations to come and strengthen the region's economy.

Significant Residential Projects

The Woods at Chaffee Crossing	163 lots	southeast corner of Zero St. & Massard Rd.
Cisterna Villa garden homes	87 lots	Chaffee Crossing off Massard Rd.
Willowbrook subdivision	77 lots	Hwy. 253 & Brooken Hill Dr.
Williamson Place	144 lots	Old Hwy. 71/Tennessee Circle Rd.
Ridgewood at Rye Hill	101 lots	Howard Hill Rd. and Rye Hill Rd.
Eastwood Estates	approx. 150 lots	Howard Hill Rd. and Rye Hill Rd
Davis Furniture store	14 units	823 Garrison Ave.
Clayton Park	34 lots	Spradling Ave. & North 32nd St.
Reata	50 lots	Chaffee Crossing off Massard Rd.

Got Your First Traffic Ticket

.....here's some help

It's a sight we all fear – flashing blue lights in our rear-view mirror. Statistics show most motorists receive a traffic ticket at some time during their driving history. If it's your first traffic ticket, the Fort Smith District Court has an offer you shouldn't refuse. To qualify for participation in this program, the following criteria must be met.

- * Persons who have received a traffic citation in the past, in any jurisdiction, don't qualify.
- * Participation in the program must be requested and authorized by the court at the time your plea is entered. You may not participate retroactively.
- * You must have a valid driver's license in effect at the time the citation was issued.
- * Only those moving traffic offenses which result in the assessment of points against your driving privileges qualify for the program. DWI offenses and

offenses which occur in conjunction with a DWI don't qualify.

- * This program doesn't prevent an accident from appearing on your record.

If authorization is granted, you must comply with the following conditions

- * Fines and costs must be paid in full by the due date – no extensions.
- * Defensive driving course must be completed by the date set.
- * No traffic offenses may be received during a 6-month probation period.

Upon successful completion of these conditions, the traffic citation will be dismissed and will not appear on your driving record. Failure to complete all of the conditions by the required date will result in the citation appearing on your record.

Reporter's Notebook

FOCUS ON FORT SMITH is circulated quarterly to all residences and businesses in the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Please address all correspondence to:

THE FOCUS
City of Fort Smith
P.O. Box 1908
Fort Smith, AR 72902
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Ray Gosack & Barbara Chatham,
Editors
Cindy Remler, Associate Editor
To place an advertisement in
THE FOCUS, call 784-2201.

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City Board Meetings

Board of Directors meetings are held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month at 6 p.m. in the Fort Smith Public Schools Service Center, 3205 Jenny Lind Rd., building B. Study sessions are held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at 12 noon at the main Fort Smith public library, 3201 Rogers Ave.

To learn of agenda information, call the city clerk's office at 784-2208. Agendas with staff reports, a summary of meeting actions, meeting minutes and video recordings of board meetings may be found on the city's web site at www.fortsmithar.gov. Click on mayor and board of directors and then select current meeting info. Regular meetings are televised live and by playback on channel 6 on the Cox Communications cable TV system.

The public is invited to all meetings. At regular meetings, the public may comment on agenda items and may introduce items involving city government not listed on the agenda.

Mayor

C. Ray Baker

Board of Directors

Steve Tyler, Ward 1
André Good, Ward 2
Don Hutchings, Ward 3
Bill Maddox, Ward 4
Gary Campbell, At Large,
Position 5
Kevin Settle, At Large,
Position 6
Dr. Cole Goodman, At Large,
Position 7

City Administrator

Dennis Kelly

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City of Fort Smith
P. O. Box 1908
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72902
www.fortsmithar.gov

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Good Neighbors Build a Community

Fort Smith is known as one of the friendliest and most helpful cities in Arkansas. Mayor **Ray Baker** regularly presents *Good Neighbor* awards to citizens who help their neighbors and friends. The neighbors' good deeds can be a wide variety of acts such as helping with yard work, running errands and cooking meals. Being a good neighbor has a positive influence on our community.

Nominations for Fort Smith's *Good Neighbor Awards* are accepted at any time. Every 2 months, award recipients are selected from the nominations sent to the mayor's office. The good neighbors are recognized with a plaque presented at a board of directors meeting, a *Good Neighbor* sign placed in their yard, a rose and an annual *Good Neighbor* luncheon.

If you'd like to nominate someone for a *Good Neighbor* award, send your nomination to Mayor Ray Baker, City of Fort Smith, P.O. Box 1908, Fort Smith, AR 72902 or by e-mail to mayor@fortsmithar.gov. Be sure to describe why your nomination deserves the award.

